

South Carolina Safety Facts: Seat Belt Safety



Top Five Myths and Facts about Seat Belts

1. I don't need to wear a seat belt when driving at slow speeds or on short trips.
2. If I wear a seat belt, I might get trapped in my car if it catches on fire or becomes submerged under water.
3. If I don't wear a seat belt, I'm not affecting anyone but myself. If I'm injured or die in a crash from not wearing a seat belt, that's my business!
4. I don't need to wear a seat belt because my vehicle has air bags.
5. I might be saved if I'm thrown clear of the crash.

South Carolina has a primary seat belt law, meaning every driver and passenger in a vehicle must be wearing a seat belt while driving on streets and highways. If 90 percent of motorists on our nation's roads buckled up, 1,600 additional fatalities and 22,000 additional serious injuries could be prevented each year. In South Carolina alone, an estimated 108 additional lives and 1,006 additional serious injuries could be saved (a monetary savings of \$247 million).

Myth #1

FACT: Most crash deaths occur within 25 miles of home and at speeds of less than 40 mph.

Did You Know? Fatal injuries to unrestrained motorists have occurred in vehicles traveling as slow as 12 mph. An unbelted person hitting a windshield in a 40-mph crash would feel the same force as hitting the ground after falling off a five-story building.

Myth #2

FACT: Crashes involving fire or water occur in less than one half of one percent of all crashes. The greatest danger to vehicle occupants is from the impact of the crash itself.

Did You Know? Those wearing a seat belt are more likely to be uninjured and conscious after a crash, allowing them to get out of the vehicle quickly.

Myth #3

FACT: Deaths and injuries that result from non-use of seat belts cost everyone in the form of higher insurance premiums, medical costs, property damage, and loss of productivity. Plus, the emotional cost to victims' families is too great to measure.

Did You Know? In 2019, 978 people in South Carolina were killed in motor vehicle crashes. The total of crash-related deaths in South Carolina each year results in greater than \$1.05 billion from medical costs and work loss costs.

Myth #4

FACT: Air bags are designed to work in combination with seat belts, providing supplemental protection during certain types of crashes. Seat belts help to properly position occupants to maximize the air bags' benefits and help restrain occupants during the initial impact and any following collisions.

Did You Know? Air bags inflate at a speed of over 100 mph. An unrestrained or improperly restrained occupant can be seriously injured or killed by the force of an activated air bag.

Myth #5

FACT: Being thrown to safety in a crash is almost impossible.

Did You Know? You are 25 times more likely to be killed in a crash when thrown from a vehicle. You may be thrown through the windshield and into another vehicle or fixed object, scraped along the pavement, or even crushed by your own vehicle.

Safety Fact



Risk of injury is greater in the front seat for children, with or without an air bag. Research shows it is best from children age 12 and under to ALWAYS ride in the back seat!



Motor Vehicle Crash-Related Injuries in SC



Data Sources: Deaths: SC Collision and Ticket Tracking System, SCDPE, 2019 Data, Hospital and ER visits: SC Hospital Discharge Database, Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, Health and Demographics Section, 2018 Data

Safety Fact

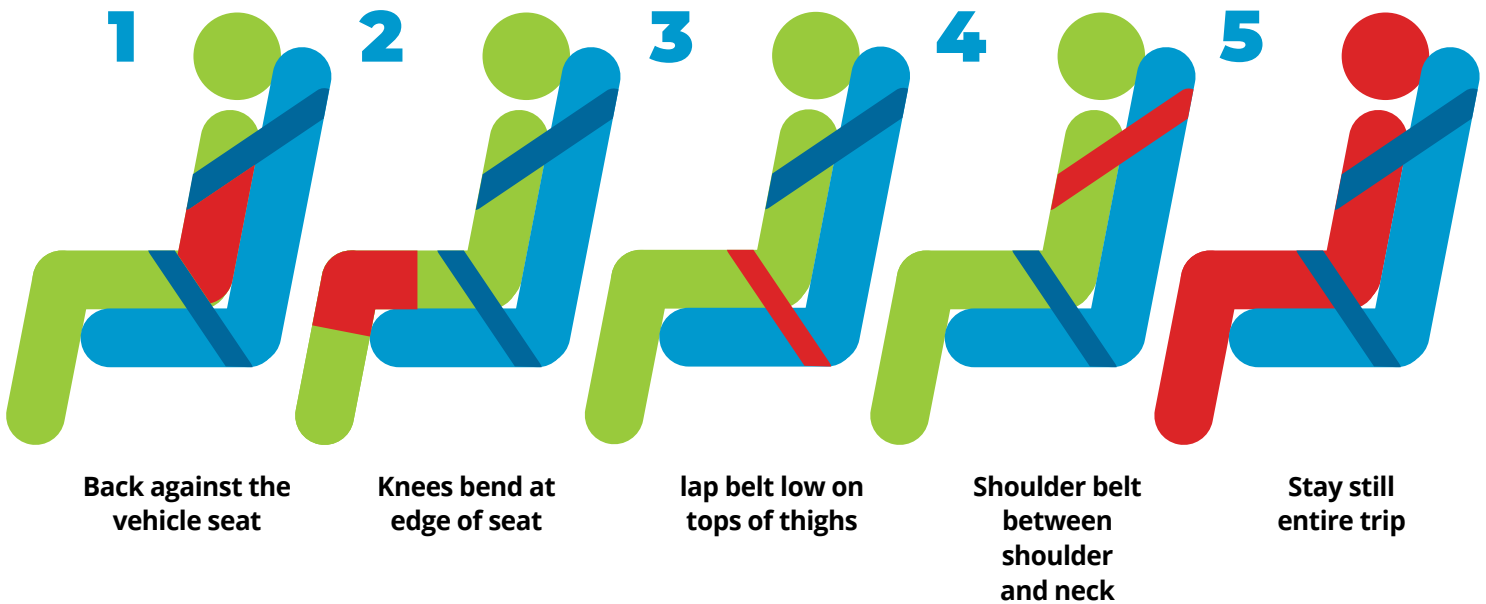
Research has found that proper use of lap/shoulder belt reduces the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passengers by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent.



How do I correctly wear a seat belt?

To get the most benefit out of your safety belt, you should wear it low over the pelvis with the bottom edge touching the tops of the thighs. The shoulder belt should be worn over the shoulder and across the chest, not under the arm or over the abdomen. Make certain that the shoulder belt is not worn so loosely that it slides off the shoulder. Pregnant women should wear the lap belt below the abdomen and the shoulder belt above the belly.

The 5 Step Test



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